

# Is Your Family LEAD Safe?



Give Your Home A  
LEAD Check-Up With  
Lead Testing Swabs!

## Why is lead dangerous?

Lead is poisonous when swallowed or inhaled. Small lead dust particles that cannot be seen can get into the body. Although lead is a hazard to adults, children are at most risk for serious health problems. While adults may experience high blood pressure, headaches, memory and concentration problems from occupational exposure, lead in children can cause reduced IQ's and learning disabilities that last a lifetime. Young children are at great risk due to their frequent hand-to-mouth behavior and rapid development. Lead can also harm a pregnant woman and her developing fetus.

## What is a lead testing swab?

Lead testing swabs are an easy way to check your home for lead. They contain chemicals that change color when rubbed against a surface that contains lead. These swabs can only detect lead where tested. They do not tell how much lead is present or if it is a hazard. The lead testing swabs can be found at many hardware/home improvement stores.

## Why test my home for lead?

You should consider testing your home if:

- Your home has children under six years of age living in or often visiting.
- Your home has a child with an elevated blood lead level.
- Your home was built before 1978.

## Where should I test for lead?

The most important areas to test are those areas where children spend a lot of time, such as playrooms, bedrooms, kitchens, and backyards. Areas where lead-based paint is frequently found include:

- window frames and sills
- mini blinds
- stairs and railings
- doors and door jams
- floors and baseboards
- toys
- furniture
- ceramics
- thresholds
- water pipes

# Is Your Family LEAD Safe?



Give Your Home A  
LEAD Check-Up With  
Lead Testing Swabs!

## How do I use the lead testing swabs?

Lead testing swabs are a convenient way to detect lead. The entire test can be performed in 30 seconds. Be sure to follow the directions on the package very carefully. Look for a color change indicated by the testing swab if lead is detected. Remember, the swabs can only detect the presence of lead on the surface tested. Swabs may be used only once.

## What if lead is detected?

If the lead testing swab detects lead:

- Contact your doctor or local health department for information on ways you can prevent lead poisoning.
- Contact your doctor or local health department to have your child, especially those under the age of six, tested for lead poisoning.
- Consider hiring a state-certified lead assessor to inspect your home for lead.

## How can I prevent lead poisoning?

If lead was detected, there are things you can do to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

- Wash your child's hands and toys often. Make sure only clean, safe objects are put into their mouth.
- Provide small frequent meals that are rich in protein, calcium, and iron.
- Regularly mop and dust your home with a wet sponge, especially areas where paint is chipping, peeling, or dusting. Dry mopping and dusting will spread dust. Use a HEPA-filtered vacuum when vacuuming.
- Cover bare soil with grass or shrubs.

---

### MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Section for Environmental Public Health

P.O. Box 570

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570

(573) 526-4911 or (800) 392-0272

